



U.S. States MARINE CORPS ANNIVERSARY

November 10, 2008



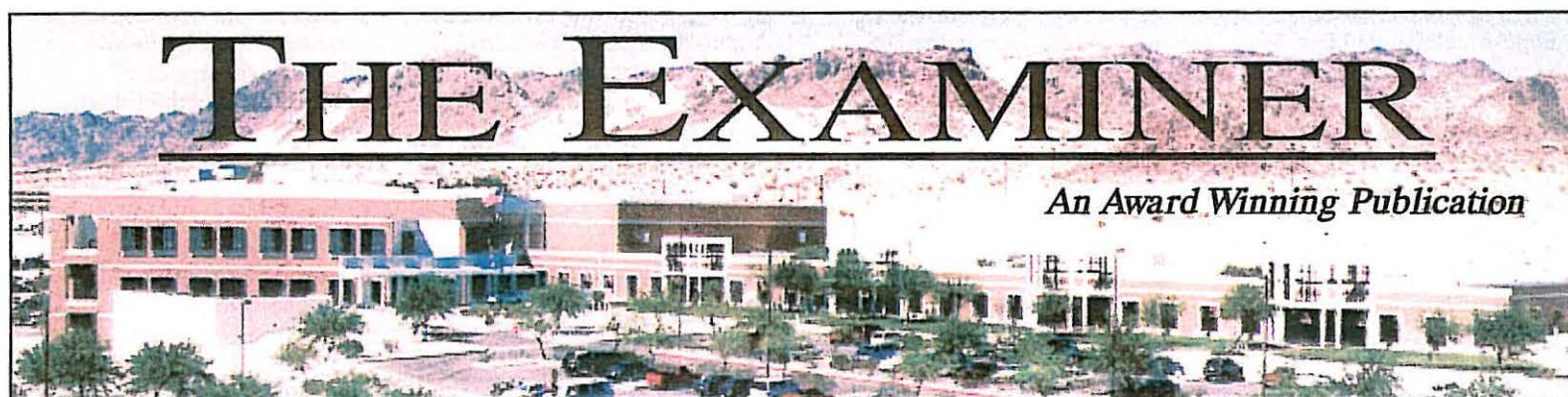
Robert E. Bush
Naval Hospital

Election Day - Nov. 4th

Marine Corps Birthday -
Nov. 10th

Veteran's Day - Nov.
11th

Great American Smoke
Out Nov. 14th



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FOCUS Project Debuts At Combat Center this Month

The FOCUS Project (Families OverComing Under Stress) is opening its doors for Family Resiliency Training at Twentynine Palms later this month.

Knowing that the Long Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan take a toll not only on service members on the front lines, but on family members back home, the U.S. Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) is working with UCLA to launch FOCUS at the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) and at eight other military bases across the nation and Okinawa, Japan in 2008. According to Capt. Robert L. Koffman, a combat and operational stress control consultant and director of psychological health for BUMED, "For married service members, one of the best ways leadership can enhance psychological resilience is to ensure the family unit remains, strong, healthy and intact."

Given that about 40 percent of U.S. service members are parents, a large number of military families stand to benefit from what FOCUS offers -- targeted resiliency skills for Marines, Sailors and their families who are dealing with often long, multiple, and extended deployments. The services are preventive to help children and families avoid serious problems.

Continued on page 7

Navy's 233rd Anniversary Celebrated



In keeping with tradition, Sailors parade the cake at the recent Navy Birthday Ball held Oct. 24, in Primm, Nevada. Participants included active duty and retired Navy and Marine Corps Personnel and family from the area of the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center here in Twentynine Palms. Guest speaker for this year's celebration was Captain Don C.B. Albia, Commanding Officer, Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms. See photos on page 5 & 8

Inside...

November is tobacco awareness month and tobacco use is the greatest deterrents to combat readiness and health! *page 2*

This is another article in the no free lunch series. While high blood pressure or Hypertension (HTN) is not yet on the list of Navy Medicine topics that our hospital budget is based on, it is rumored that HTN will be on the list soon and that there will be as many as 50 of these budget based health concerns in the next five years. *page 3*

Superstars *page 4*

Turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie... mmmmm... Nothing says "Thanksgiving" like cool weather, family visits and lots of food! *page 6*

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Combat Readiness and Tobacco Do Not Mix!

By Martha Hunt, MA
Health Promotion Coordinator
Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms

November is tobacco awareness month and tobacco use is the greatest deterrents to combat readiness and health!

The most likely causes of early medical discharge from all branches of the military are tobacco use related illnesses such as cancer, heart disease, and lung disease, injuries that don't heal and a wealth of health problems made worse by tobacco use. Not only is tobacco use costly in terms of health outcomes, but the Department of Defense (DoD) loses money eight to one on tobacco sales. For every dollar of profits in the exchange system, the health care side of the DoD loses \$8 in extra health care costs for Active Duty.

In fact, tobacco use is associated with excess training costs to the DoD of an additional \$130 million every year. Not to mention, each tobacco user costs the DoD over \$5,200 annually in lost wages due to tobacco breaks. Because of tobacco use in active duty military, the DoD spends \$1.6 billion dollars every year due to premature death and disability costs. This amount does not include the amount spend on non-debilitating health costs such as increased colds or asthma, costs from lost work days, or health care for dependents, veterans or retirees.

Seventy percent of all Marines and over half of all Navy personnel use some form of tobacco. On a base the size of ours, this translates to several thousand active duty either smoking or dipping tobacco. The Air Force has determined that if all active duty in the Air Force stopped using tobacco, they could man an average sized base with the savings from health care costs and man-hours lost to smoking breaks. The Air Force is leading the way in becoming tobacco free and it is estimated that they will complete their transition to tobacco free status in 2010.

Tobacco is one of the most addictive substances on earth and affects every part of your

body. With regards to combat readiness, tobacco use affects how well your heart pumps and how well you breathe and get oxygen to your body. Tobacco use damages your lungs by cutting down on your air flow and limiting the amount of oxygen that is available to your muscles in times of stress. Basically, how fast do you think you can move when your leg muscles are not getting enough oxygen to fuel your run or hike?

Some of the other effects of tobacco that impede combat readiness include the fact that tobacco dehydrates you. If you are fighting in a desert environment, you will need even more water to stay hydrated than a non-tobacco user. When you are dehydrated, especially when under the stress of combat, you are at even greater risk of overheating and heat injury.

Tobacco also puts you at increased risk of injury, prolonged healing and increased risk of infection. Tobacco leaches the calcium from your body and leads to increased bone breaking and fractures. Tobacco use also decreases your stamina so that when you are under the stress of deployment, you become run down more easily than normally. Tobacco use also effects foot blistering when running or marching. Tobacco users are more likely to suffer foot injury due to blistering than are non-tobacco users.

Tobacco use decreases your mental acuity and increases your stress. Yes, everyone thinks that tobacco helps with stress, but what it really does is give you a dose of the pleasure chemicals in your brain so you feel happy for a few minutes. The long term effects of tobacco are decreased mental acuity and increased stress. We also know that individuals exposed to a traumatic event such as combat are twice as likely to develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) than are those individuals who are not tobacco users.

One of the reasons tobacco users use tobacco is that they wrongly think that it controls their weight. We now know that tobacco use resets your sugar and starch taste buds and actually causes you to crave sugary and starchy foods (i.e. - a burger, fries and a soda). This in

turns causes you to have a never ending cycle of cravings for high fat and high sugar foods. Even if you drink diet sodas, you are still consuming those calories elsewhere as your brain just knows there is no sugar in that drink and will drive you to consume those calories elsewhere (i.e. -- burger, super size fries and diet soda!). In fact, you would have to gain 150 extra pounds to equal the same health risks as a pack a day habit.

Finally, tobacco damages your night vision and is the leading cause of blindness in the U.S. Whether standing guard or driving at night, tobacco damages how well you see in the dark and will put you at increased risk of an accident or missing

important information you need to know.

There is more to tobacco than just nicotine and smoke (or spit if you are a dipper). There are over 4,000 different chemicals identified in tobacco including salt-peter, benzene, radium, and formaldehyde. Over 60 of these chemicals are known to cause cancer and some are addictive in their own right. Some of these chemicals are added during the processing of the tobacco, while others are pesticides and fertilizers used in growing the tobacco. Ammonia and urea are added to tobacco to make the nicotine 'free base' and to increase its addictive powers.

Smokeless tobacco or dip is even more dangerous to combat

readiness and your body than is tobacco in cigarettes or cigars. The reason for this is that dip is placed directly against the gum and left there, causing you to absorb 100 times more nicotine and other chemicals than when you smoke. The rush of nicotine in dip is stronger than in cigarettes or cigars, adding more stress to your heart and increasing your heart rate and blood pressure.

Don't let your addiction to tobacco affect your combat readiness. Contact your health provider for the medications that can help you give up tobacco and contact Health Promotion and Wellness at 830-2814 to get more information on successfully giving up tobacco.

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The Examiner welcomes your comments and suggestions concerning the publication. Deadline for submission of articles is the 15th of each month for the following month's edition. Any format is welcome, however, the preferred method of submission is by e-mail or by computer disk.

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Why Does my Doc Watch my Blood Pressure?

By Martha Hunt, MA
Health Promotion and Wellness
Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms

This is another article in the no free lunch series. While high blood pressure or Hypertension (HTN) is not yet on the list of Navy Medicine topics that our hospital budget is based on, it is rumored that HTN will be on the list soon and that there will be as many as 50 of these budget based health concerns in the next five years.

Remember that with this performance based budget, if you and your Provider do not work together to help you to be as healthy as possible, then Navy Medicine thinks we are not doing our job and we lose funding. If you and your provider work as a team, then the hospital is given a financial bonus and we can offer more services to the community as a whole.

Why is my blood pressure so important? HTN is known as the silent killer. As many as 1 in 3 Americans have HTN and many may not even know it since there are rarely any symptoms to high blood pressure. Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries as the heart pumps out blood. If this pressure rises and stays high over time, it can damage the body in many ways including coronary heart disease, heart failure, stroke, kidney failure, and other health problems.

This is why knowing your blood pressure numbers is important, even when you're feeling fine. If your blood pressure is normal, you can work with your health care team to keep it that way. If your blood pressure is too high, you need treatment to prevent damage to your body's organs.

Your blood pressure is often given as a set of two numbers - systolic and diastolic. Systolic blood pressure is the pressure when the heart beats while pumping blood. Diastolic blood pressure is the pressure when the heart is at rest between beats.

Normal blood pressure is numbers less than 120/ 80. Pre-hypertension is from 120 to 139/ and 80 to 89. Stage one HTN is from 140 to 159 / and 90 to 99.

Stage 2 HTN is any number over 160 / and over 100. All levels above 120/80 mmHg raise your risk, and the risk grows as blood pressure levels rise. "Pre-hypertension" means you're likely to end up with HTN unless you take steps to prevent it.

Anyone can get high blood pressure. But some people have a greater chance of having it because of things that they can't change. These are: Age. The chance of having high blood pressure increases as you get older. Gender. Before age 55, men have a greater chance of having high blood pressure. Women are more likely to have high blood pressure after menopause. Family history. High blood pressure tends to run in some families. Race. African-Americans are at increased risk for high blood pressure.

How can you prevent or help control your blood pressure? To start, there are many lifestyle changes you can make to lower your risk of high blood pressure. First of all, keep a healthy weight since being overweight adds to your risk of high blood pressure. Ask your doctor if you need to lose weight. Secondly, exercise every day. Moderate exercise can lower your risk of high blood pressure. Try to exercise at least 30 minutes a day most days of the week. Check with your doctor before starting an exercise plan if you have a long-term health problem or are over 50 and have been inactive.

Eat a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products may help to lower blood pressure. Ask

your doctor or the hospital registered dietitian about following a healthy diet. Cutting down on salt can also help. Many Americans eat more salt (sodium) than they need. Most of the salt comes from processed food (for example, soup and baked goods). A low-salt diet might help lower your blood pressure.

Drinking alcohol can also raise your blood pressure. Most men should not have more than two drinks a day while most women should not drink more than one drink a day. Tobacco in all forms increases your risk for high blood pressure and heart disease. If you use tobacco, quit. Health Promotions and your provider can help you to quit tobacco with medications and support through classes and counseling.

Learn better ways to manage your stress. People react to stress in different ways. For some, stress can cause their blood pressure to go up. Talk to your doctor about how you can lower stress or contact health promotions for stress reduction information. Getting a good night's sleep is also important in controlling your blood pressure. Also, if you snore, you may have sleep apnea which not only bothers your spouse but it can cause you to get less healthy sleep and it can raise your blood pressure. If you have sleep apnea, your provider can refer you to a sleep specialist for help.

If these lifestyle changes don't control your high blood pressure, your doctor will prescribe medicine. It is very important that if you are put on these med-

ications, that you take them as directed by your provider and tell your provider of any side effects you may have from them.

So? Why does my provider watch my blood pressure? First of all and most importantly, your provider watches your blood pressure to help you live a long and healthy life. We also help you watch your blood pressure so that when Navy medi-

cine looks at our number of patients with out of control blood pressure they see that we are trying hard to help everyone keep their blood pressure under control. Then Navy Medicine rewards us with more money in our budget so that we can offer more staffing and services to everyone in our Naval Hospital community.

What do Those Cholesterol Numbers Mean?

By Martha Hunt, MA, CAMF
Health Promotion and Wellness
Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital

I know that by now some readers of the Examiner are tired of hearing about "no free lunch," the performance based budget (PBB) and how it impacts the services that the hospital is able to offer. "Ok, we get it. We need to be pro-active and work as a team with our Doc's to ensure our own health and the financial health of the hospital!"

The main drive behind PBB is to help you be as healthy as possible NOW by focusing on prevention (screening and controlling blood pressure, cholesterol, tobacco use etc) so that you are less likely to develop diabetes, heart disease, cancer Later. When the health care system spends time, energy and funding on prevention, then many of the big ticket health problems can be avoided.

So? Why is my cholesterol important? Your blood cholesterol level has a lot to do with your chances of getting heart

disease. High blood cholesterol is one of the major risk factors for heart disease. In fact, the higher your blood cholesterol level, the greater your risk for developing heart disease or having a heart attack. Heart disease is the number one killer of women and men in the United States. Each year, more than a million Americans have heart attacks and about a half million people die from heart disease.

High cholesterol, like high blood pressure, is a silent killer. You can't feel the gradual build up of fatty deposits in your arteries and you may not even be aware of it until you suffer chest pain or a heart attack.

Everyone age 20 and older should have their cholesterol measured at least once every 5 years. It is best to have a blood test called a "lipoprotein profile" to find out your cholesterol numbers. This blood test is done after a 9 to 12 hour fast and gives information about your: Total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol—the main source of cholesterol buildup and block-

Continued on page 7

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Super Stars...



HM3 Cody Bauman, Adult Medical Care Clinic, receives a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.



Ms. Dolores McCartney, Branch Clinic Bridgeport, receives a Letter of Appreciation.



HN Hendee, Branch Clinic China Lake receives a Letter of Appreciation.



Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Malderella, Branch Clinic Bridgeport, receives a Letter of Commendation.



HM2 Michael Perry, Branch Clinic Bridgeport, receives a Letter of Appreciation.



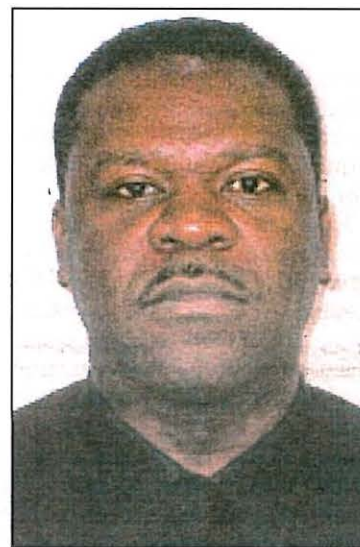
SK1 Kimberly Blaine-Sweet, Material Management, receives her fourth Good Conduct Award.



HM2 Renee Garnett, Branch Clinic Bridgeport, receives a Letter of Appreciation.



HM1 Toby Hernandez, Branch Clinic Bridgeport, receives a Letter of Commendation.



HM1 Naji MoHammed, Branch Clinic China Lake, receives a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.



HM3 Carmen Richard, Branch Clinic Bridgeport, receives a Letter of Appreciation.



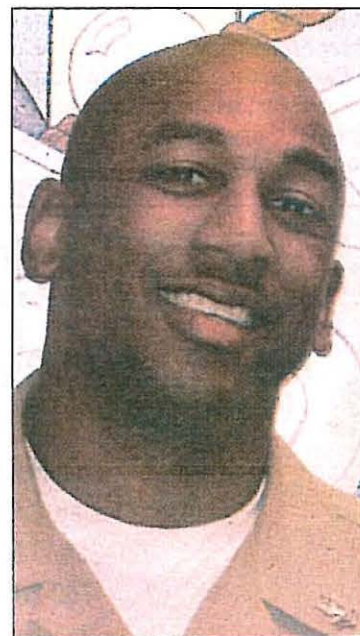
Lt. Cmdr. Peter Bleyer, Officer in Charge, Branch Clinic Bridgeport, receives a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.



HN Matthew Geisler, Branch Clinic Bridgeport, receives a Letter of Appreciation.



HM1 Ryan Hiderbrand, Branch Clinic Bridgeport, receives a Letter of Commendation.



HM2 Mark Nunsuch, Branch Clinic Bridgeport, receives a Letter of Appreciation.



HM3 James Snyder, Branch Clinic Bridgeport, receives a Letter of Appreciation.



HM1 Toston, Preventive Medicine Department, receives a Navy and Marine Corps Commandeaiton Medal.

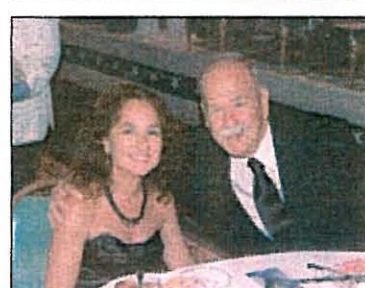


Lt. Bruce Yee, Adult Medical Care Clinic, receives his Fleet Marine Force Qualification Pin.



Cmdr. Jay Erickson, right, is honored at his recent retirement ceremony by Capt. Don C.B. Albia, left, Commanding Officer, Naval Hospital Twentnine Palms, CA

Navy Celebrates 233rd Anniversary...



Ombudsman Corner



What's going on in November?

Turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie... mmmmm...

Nothing says "Thanksgiving" like cool weather, family visits and lots of food!

If you are planning a get-together for Thanksgiving and you know you will have entirely too much food (like you always do), and you need someone to share with, consider "Adopting a Marine or Sailor." The Single Marine Program offers families in the area a chance to sign up to adopt Marines and Sailors for the holidays. Thanksgiving sign ups are going on right now and December will start the sign ups for the Christmas adoption program. Contact the base Single Marine Program to register!

Although Thanksgiving is one of the main activities during the month of November, there are a lot of other things to look forward to in our area. Especially since the kids will be out of school for a week, and if you have family coming to visit, you might be looking for something to do outside the house and

away from the Playstation, Wii, or Xbox.

The easiest thing is to surf the internet for specific cities you plan to travel to on a search engine of your choice. Some places have Chamber of Commerce pages that offer a community calendar; others have town pages or tourist pages, especially if you're looking to visit National Parks or Museums.

I provided a list of just a few things I found for the immediate area. Some have a website or contact phone number provided. For the others, you will need to search the town name and find a webpage that offers directions to a Calendar or a Tourist page on the site where you can refine your search to your needs.

Idyllwild -- Paint your own pottery! www.idyllwildchamber.com

Joshua Tree National Park -- Plan Your Visit at www.nps.gov/jotr/

Twentynine Palms -- Take in a Drive-In Movie at Smith's Ranch! Call for listings (367.7713) or just drive down Adobe Rd to see what's playing. Two movies for \$5? What a bargain!

Big Bear -- Horse drawn carriage rides, solar observatory, skiing and snowboarding season usually starts at the end of November, but spring is the best time for Southern California. www.bearmountainresorts.com.

Pioneertown -- Pappy & Harriets, cabin rentals, etc. www.pioneertown.com

Yucca Valley -- www.yuccavalley.org has the option to click on



The Barker Dam Loop in the Joshua Tree National Park is an easy 1 mile hike and an ideal spot for a picnic lunch. Photo by Dan Barber

a "Tourism" box on the left side. That will provide a long list of local attractions that include some down the hill.

Joshua Tree -- Farmers' Market on Saturdays from 0800-1300. Restaurants and shops along Hwy 62 and down Park Blvd.

Palm Springs -- Air Museum, Aerial Tramway, Boomer's. All of these have a fee to get in, but usually offer a military discount or "Military Day" special.

Palm Desert -- The Living Desert, Knotts Soak City
Rancho Mirage -- Children's Museum and an IMAX Theater along with plenty of restaurants to choose from.

Cathedral City -- The River is a shopping center with a movie theater, book store, restaurants and entertainment in an outdoor area by the water- Man made, of course.

Cabazon -- Outlet shopping! And huge dinosaurs for pictures and admiring!

Oak Glen -- U-Pick apples and

other fruits, hand made cider, pies, and a great all-around family experience. This place gets very busy on the weekends, so check out the website to get an idea of what is available before you get there: www.oakglen.net.

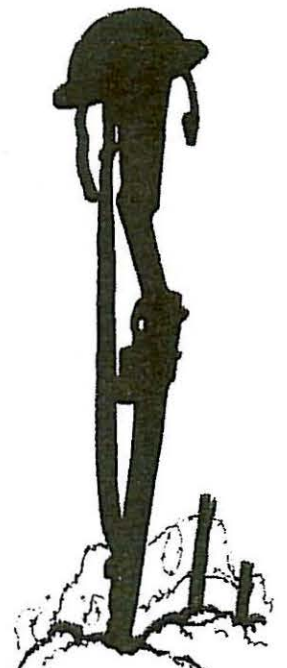
If this is your first time in Twentynine Palms, it may seem like it's in the middle of nowhere. But if you take advantage of what is offered around you it may not seem so desolate and boring. You may even be surprised what you can see in the desert! Thousands of orchids in Landers, first class rock climbing in Joshua Tree National Park, snow in Big Bear and Idyllwild, farm animals and fruit picking in Oak Glen. Broaden your horizons and get experiences to last a lifetime for yourself and your family.

One final thing to add to your "Check This Out" List is something called The Great Southern California Shake Out. This is the largest drill of its kind and is meant to prepare Southern

California for a magnitude 7.8 earthquake along the San Andreas Fault. It will take place 13 November and you can find more details at www.shakeout.org.

If you were in the area in 1999, you probably remember the 7.1 Hector Mine quake or the 7.3 Landers quake in 1992. Wouldn't it have been nice to have had some preparation before hand? Especially for those of us not from earthquake prone places, knowing how to prepare gives a little reassurance for when it does happen. The website offers individuals, families, neighborhoods and other groups a place to register for the drill, shows what is happening by county and some of the main activities planned.

VETERAN'S DAY



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ATLAS SELF STORAGE

Navy Medicine Info Systems Center Relocates to San Antonio

By Larry Coffey
Navy Medicine Support Command Public Affairs

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (NNS) — The Navy Medicine Information Systems Support Activity (NAVMISSA) held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Oct. 21 to celebrate the command's arrival in San Antonio.

Navy Medicine's IM/IT center was reorganized from the Naval Medical Information Management Center in Bethesda, Md., to NAVMISSA Sept. 1 and continues steps to

become fully operational in San Antonio.

Rear Adm. Richard Vinci, commander, Navy Medicine Support Command (NMSC), served as guest speaker and spoke about the NAVMISSA team accomplishments and future changes. NMSC is NAVMISSA's parent command.

"Capt. (Tina) Ortiz (NAVMISSA commanding officer) has led a talented, hard-working team of

what I affectionately call 'electronic brainiacs,'" Vinci said. "The team is aligning NAVMISSA with the DoD Military Health System and TMA (Tricare Management Activity). Their hard work will ultimately pay off with superior information systems products and services across Navy medicine."

Providing information systems products and services to Navy medicine is NAVMISSA's mission. NAVMISSA also protects Navy medicine networks through an effective information assurance program that ensures customer privacy, Ortiz said.

NAVMISSA is projected to employ 149 people when the command is fully operational in San Antonio in April 2009 and the Bethesda detachment is closed. The majority of the staff is expected to be hired from the San Antonio area.

Ortiz said there are several benefits to the San Antonio relocation. Relocating to San Antonio places NAVMISSA geographically close to its Army and Air Force service partners but still allows it to remain a separate command. Economic benefits include the ability to attract and retain the right work force while realizing significant cost-of-living reductions when compared to the Washington area.

There will also be benefits to

Navy medicine, said Patricia Craddock, the NMSC M-5 deputy chief of staff who is responsible for NAVMISSA.

"As NAVMISSA transitions to San Antonio, they will rebuild the organization using a new organization map that will be more agile and capable of responding to the customer's

needs," Craddock said. "The new organizational structure will offer stronger program management, which will match the requirements of a system based on the phase of its lifecycle -- development and deployment, sustainment or retirement, for instance."

Cholesterol Numbers...

Continued from page 3

age in the arteries, HDL (good) cholesterol—helps keep cholesterol from building up in the arteries and Triglycerides—another form of fat in your blood.

Risk factors for high cholesterol that you CAN control include diet, activity, weight and tobacco use. The risk factors you CANNOT control include family history, age and gender. Cholesterol levels rise with age and in women are lower than men before menopause, with women's levels rising as they pass menopause.

So please ask your provider to check your cholesterol levels if you have not had them check in a while or you can't recall when you had them checked. When you and your provider work together to keep you healthy now, you are less likely to suffer ill health later in life.

FOCUS Project...

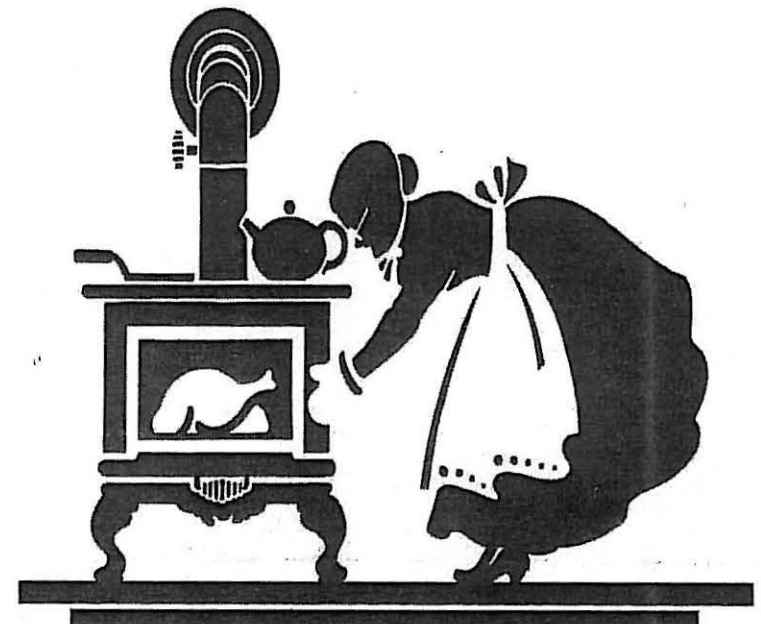
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"There is increasing awareness that military families, especially the children, can be significantly affected when a parent is deployed, and there is even greater psychological wear and tear when there are multiple deployments," said Dr. Patricia Lester, UCLA assistant professor of child and adolescent psychiatry and director of the FOCUS project. "The spouse left behind is suddenly thrust into the role of being a single parent; routines are interrupted, the children may not understand where their mom or dad has gone, and the service member on the front lines is constantly worried about how their family is doing back home."

FOCUS at Twentynine Palms: What, Where, When

The FOCUS office is located at Building 1551, the Village Center, and provides both parents and children customized training that addresses the impact of wartime deployment on families, and helps them learn very specific communication and problem-solving skills to address these challenges. All training is confidential and offered at family-friendly hours: on weekends and in the evenings, as well as during regular work hours. Resiliency trainers also provide skill-building groups to raise awareness about the many pressures families face. "We are looking forward to working with the service members and families at Twentynine Palms and couldn't have asked for a better welcome from Sergeant Major Susan Bellis, and the many programs already doing great work here," said Dr. Dorit Susan Ilani, the Twentynine Palms FOCUS Site Director.

FOCUS' customized family resiliency training is targeted toward families with children ages five to eighteen, also providing skill-building for those with younger children on a space-available basis. For further information, please contact the Twentynine Palms FOCUS office at 760-830-3818 or email at info@focusproject.org or dilani@focusproject.org.



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233rd Anniversary...

Continued from page 5



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